

WINTER AND THE "GREAT COLD"

than two cows. . . . You can work it out yourself. I'd like 237
to give our litter louts a few years' training in Hunza.

Salt is a crying need in Hunza, and while down-country rock- 135
salt can be obtained on payment from Gilgit, few families can 263
afford to buy. Hence in the relatively idle days of early winter
you will see parties of women and girls and boys scouring the
mountain side high up, and tasting as they go, till they find a
patch of ground that seems to have a trace of saltiness in it.
They scoop up the full of their baskets and carry this earth
home. When salt is wanted they mount a conical basket filled
with the saline earth over some receiving vessel. By pouring
water through, they get a discoloured fluid, containing heaven
alone knows what (probably a minimum of sodium chloride),
which they pour straight into the vegetable pot.

Another job which is kept for winter days is the making of 241
new fields. It is all too true that the Hunzukuts have not
enough water to serve their existing fields. But there are
optimists who cannot resist the attraction of making a new
field wherever they see a patch of ground that might with
luck be irrigated in a good year. It's a serious business tackling
a rocky bit of mountain side. You roughly plan your field and
then start hacking out a great triangular gash at the upper side.
It is full of stones and boulders which have to be removed; the
smaller ones are set aside for the revetting walls; the larger
ones are laboriously broken up with sledge-hammers (or
blasted if you can get hold of a little gunpowder); the stony
earth is carefully sifted into separate piles of varying degrees of
fineness. Then the lower supporting wall is built to the level
required, stones are thrown in for a foundation, next the
coarser earth, and the surface is dressed with the finer. Field- 241
making is the only occasion on which a barrow of any kind is 493 ●
of use. These barrows, of which in our whole time we only
saw four, are the only wheeled vehicles known in Hunza.
Whether the Hunzukuts invented them themselves or whether
someone once saw a wheelbarrow in use elsewhere and im-
ported the idea, who shall say? Anyhow, the Hunza wheel-
barrow is a delightful affair. A sort of rude ladder with four
or five rungs is made. A thick section of a tree trunk about

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241 9 to 12 inches in diameter is impaled on one of the rungs to
 493 form the wheel. Axis and wheel rotate together in the two side
 holes of the frame, and to reduce the friction a tough ring of
 wicker work is placed between the wheel and the side of the
 ladder-frame. One of the usual shoulder baskets is then lashed
 between a pair of the rungs, and *voilà* . . . your apparatus is
 complete.

There were several batches of field-making enthusiasts whom
 we used to visit on our afternoon excursions—cold work it
 must have been with the snow lying to within a few feet of
 where they were working, but they did not seem to feel it, or
 perhaps the vision of future crops helped to keep them warm.

132 When once the Great Cold lays its icy hand on the country
 all outdoor human activity ceases as suddenly and completely
 as the sound of flowing water, and no one voluntarily stirs
 abroad. Occasionally you may see a woman, wrapped in the
 warmest *choga* available, dash with a gourd or bucket to the
 nearest drinking tank, break the thick crust of ice re-formed
 since yesterday and bring home the needed water. The steep,
 irregular stone steps were glassy with frozen water; it would
 have been easy to fall in and difficult to scramble out, but we
 heard of no casualties. Once again we noted that families prone
 to accident are weeded out by beneficent Mother Nature when
 her ways are not interfered with.

Once a day some man or boy drives out the beasts to the
 nearest open reservoir to drink, breaking the ice anew for
 them. As the water level sinks the ice crust cracks like pastry,
 the centre falls in, leaving stratum after stratum 6 or 8 inches
 thick adhering shelf-wise to the stone walls of the reservoir.

The winter was in many ways a disappointment to us. We
 had hoped for bright days and clear air and magnificent photo-
 graphs. In fact, all the great mountains round were wrapped
 day after day in swathes of dark, snow-depositing cloud, and
 the floor of heaven, impenetrably grey, seemed suspended
 menacingly just a few inches above our heads. The immediate
 visible landscape was the dreariest it is possible to conceive;
 not an evergreen tree or bush, not a square-inch of green grass
 to break the grim monotony of sepia-grey-khaki rocks, cliffs,

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245



1. Rakapóshi in summer from Aliábád. Apricot trees in foreground. (See p. 80)

PLATE XXII

493

2. The sole type of wheeled vehicle in Hunza; a barrow used only in levelling fields.

(See p. 211)



[Facing P288]

to threaten a.o. in ar stam I 000
frightened him. *forajtsam*, or
netan, (kok) *dusuryam* putting him
in fear I took these things from
the treasurer. 60.14.

2. *ar* **MANAS* to be afraid (of), to fear.

The object, when expressed, is
put in the ablative:

Akiv or *gumaii bam ke* if you
were so afraid. 282.21. *ar naman*
at'aiya ba I have not returned,
fearing (i.e. out of fear). 282.22.
je wutsum ar amaiya ba I am
afraid of you. 18.6. *S. Bahram*
Di.u Safidsum ar niman . . .
mostaqami fearing the *Di.u Safid*,
S. B. . . hid her. 16.4.

The dative is found in:

spaci.or nicher or umaiibam they
were afraid to go to it. 222.5.
(Cp. *Sh. or*).

ar **MANAS* as Adj. and Noun.

1. One who fears: cowardly, timid.

— *ar imanas hiran baii* he is a
timid man.

2. That which one fears; alarming,

dangerous, dreadful, terrible (to
look at). — *ar mimanas dis, gan*

a place, road which we are afraid
of, i.e. a 'dangerous place, road.

ar mimanasan baii he is a dan-
gerous man, or a man of alarming
aspect. *ar mimanasan (AAYU)* bi
it is a dangerous horse.

araba-muts x gun-carriage; a kind of 493
crude wheel barrow, on which a basket
is fixed, used for transporting earth.

aran v. *aran*.

araq -ig, -icig y alcohol, spirit, arrack. 273

— *gindawero araq* spirit made from
"Sinjid" (fruit of jujube tree).

birando araq mulberry spirit (used

115 Now I didn't see his birth certificate and I might as
165 well tell you, right here and now, that no vital statistics
are kept in Hunza. I accept the figure of his age as he
told me but remember, I was not there at the time of
his birth!

344 When I was through with my spasm of inspection
644 and admiration, we began to parade up the long drive-
way that led into the Mir's garden. This area is flanked
on the right by space that looks as though it were a
parking lot, and maybe that's exactly what it is, but
instead of cars, the guests or members of the family
park—or should I say tether—their horses and yaks
in this area. Maybe now they park their jeeps there.
[493] The Mir owns two of them, but one, I understand, was
away in Pindi being repaired. (Or was it the shambles
and horrible wreck of a jeep that I came across a week
later, on the road back to Gilgit?)

126 Now I noticed that the Mir, Ayesh, the doctor and
Cec were coming along the roadway to meet us, and
soon we joined forces and were gathered in one group.
I thought this was the ideal time to take some photo-
graphs and, luckily for us, they were the best photo-
graphs we took on the entire trip. Photography is some-
thing that has never interested me and I had never
[122] taken half a dozen pictures in my life. Before leaving
home, I did try to learn a bit about photography, but I
couldn't learn enough fast enough.

124 When the fun, excitement and fast-flowing humorous
remarks had subsided, I said to the Mir, "If you've
nothing more important to do or if you would care to
give me a little more of your time, we could start that
question and answer session that I arranged with you
for this afternoon."

"I am at your service," he replied pleasantly and
with alacrity.

are, remember, no transportation facilities whatsoever, ^{There 164} except the Mir's jeep which the citizens of Hunza don't ^[493] get a chance to use. There is no other wheeled vehicle in the entire country. Practically every step is a climb or a descent. So no one could really accuse me of exaggeration if I were bold enough to say that they're probably the most active and energetic people in creation. It could hardly be otherwise.

To illustrate another proof of their hardiness, all ¹⁴⁷ along the trail we met people from Hunza walking barefoot—from young children to boys and young men and old men. While some wore shoes, most of them were ^[291] barefoot. They walked over sand, over gravel, over stones, over plain dirt roads without any misgivings.

I watched them with awe as they ran, walked and skipped over these exceedingly rough spots and I was convinced they must have exceptionally strong, sound, healthy feet and legs.

On a few occasions I watched the Hunzans digging ^[412] with a shovel. 'Tis done the ordinary natural way there—barefooted. That certainly proves, at least to me, that their feet are in wonderful condition. Most people in America can't dig worth a darn wearing heavy boots!

It is unqualifiedly a fact, in my humble opinion, that ¹⁶⁴ the people of Hunza owe their splendid vital good health in part to these sound principles—their way of life, their food production and the way they prepare the fields for their crops—all accomplished in a natural normal way. Civilization may have many advantages—great discoveries have been made, machinery has been invented that does the work of many, many hands. In this modern machine age, a man need only work a couple of hours a day to supply himself with all the food, clothing and shelter that he can possibly use, but

164 proved laboratory by a qualified technician.

164 Their food is natural, simple, unsophisticated, with-
262 out any unnatural, inorganic, synthetic additives what-
soever. There is no fragmentation in the foods they eat.
They do not separate any part of the wheat when they
make flour, nor do they separate any part of the other
grains when using them.

252 Due to necessity they do not cook foods too much,
nor do they cook any food that can be eaten and en-
joyed without cooking.

Food is a serious, all prevalent problem. The few
trees that they have and that they can grow must be
protected for food, shade and timber.

However, I must truthfully admit that the reason
that the Hunzans do not cook their food is because of
the scarcity and inaccessibility to supplies of fuel.

751 Vaccination is not practiced and, as far as I know,
744 is unknown in Hunza. Pasteurization in any form is
neither practiced nor known. Chlorination is unheard
of. Fluoridation is unheard of. No coloring whatsoever
is added to any of their food, not even their butter.

263 Up until recent years the salt used by the people of
439 Hunza came from the Shimshal area, somewhere near
where the Shimshal River and the Muztagh join to-
gether. This salt is unrefined and used just as it is mined
from this mountain area. It obviously contains many
natural so-called impurities.

● 493 The only wheeled vehicles—two jeeps, in fact—are
owned and used by the Mir chiefly for bringing in
supplies, when road conditions permit. Therefore one
must walk for every chore. There is no motorized
377 equipment used in Hunza with the exception of the
electric light plant in the Mir's palace. Apart from what
401 I have mentioned here, mechanization of any sort is
unknown.